

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-16 and 18-43 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 17 has been canceled by this amendment.

Applicants note that a number of editorial amendments have been made to the specification for grammatical and general readability purposes. No new matter has been added.

I. Information Disclosure Statement

Regarding the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 17, 2006, Applicants thank the Examiner for returning the PTO-1449 form submitted therewith. Applicants note, however, that the Examiner inadvertently did not initial next to the one U.S. reference (Pat. No. 5,046,090) listed thereon.

Accordingly, in order to confirm that the above-noted reference has been considered on the merits, Applicants kindly request that the Examiner provide Applicants with a new signed copy of the PTO-1449 form, which includes the Examiner's initials next to the above-noted reference.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 2-39, 42 and 43 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this amendment, Applicants note that claim 1 has been amended so as to incorporate therein the allowable features recited in claim 17, thereby placing claim 1 in condition for allowance. Claims 2-16, 18-39, 42 and 43 depend from claim 1 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 40 and 41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Candelore (US 2003/0145329).

Regarding claim 1, as noted above, this claim has been amended so as to incorporate therein the features recited in allowable claim 17, thereby placing claim 1 in condition for allowance.

Regarding claims 40 and 41, Applicants note that these claims recite method steps that are similar to the features set forth in claim 1. In this regard, Applicants note that claims 40 and 41 have been amended in a similar manner as claim 1 so as to incorporate therein the features recited in claim 17. In view of these changes to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 40 and 41 are also patentable over the Candelore reference.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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